Hearing:	Subcommittee on Communications and Technology – Thursday, Dec. 3, 2015 – “Broadcast Ownership in the 21st Century”
Name of the Member:	The Honorable Ann Eshoo
Question:	**How do you respond to those that suggest that JSAs and SSAs actually increase broadcast diversity ownership?**

Answer:

Today, thanks to the relaxation of the Federal Communications Commission’s (FCC) structural media ownership rules over the past two decades, minorities own very few “real” television stations. The Multicultural Media, Telecom, and Internet Council (MMTC) believes that legislation to restore the tax certificate policy is the way to incentivize the industry to increase minority ownership. We live in an age where television viewers of all ethnicities and backgrounds deserve to receive the diversity of viewpoints that genuine television ownership makes possible.

In MMTC’s view, a JSA or SSA strips away the assets that make a television station a credible independent voice. In a JSA, control of sales inherently drives control of the programming that is sold. An SSA is even worse, allowing a theoretically unrelated but actually dominant company to make virtually every significant decision. Most of the time, the “owner” of a station in a JSA or SSA is only a figurehead installed to circumvent the FCC’s rule against allowing a single company to dominate local television station ownership. The impact is devastating. In most cases, a station “owner” in a JSA or SSA usually does not “own” or “direct” the station operations. The rare exception is in the context of education where the stations are used to train students.

MMTC has recognized FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler’s efforts to crack down on these inherently sham operations. Ultimately, MMTC does not believe that most JSAs and SSAs increase diversity of broadcast ownership.

Kim Keenan, President and CEO
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